(b) if so, the decision taken thereon;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a new policy is being formulated with regard to mining; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) and (b) One proposal has been received from State Government of Maharashtra on which prior approval of the Central Government has been conveyed on 01.06.2006.

(c) and (d) The High Level Committee constituted under the chairmanship of Shri Anwar-ul-Hoda, Member, Planning Commission to, *inter-alia*, review the National Mineral Policy, 1993, has submitted its report on 20.07.2006.

Expansion of mining activities

633. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to expand the mining activities throughout the country, since mining sector played an important role in the economy;

(b) if so, the States involved in the expansion programme; and

(c) by when the expansion activities of mines are expected to take off?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) and (b) It has been the constant endeavour of the Government to encourage greater investment in exploration and exploitation of minerals involving all the mineral bearing States in the country.

(c) Mining activities for non-fuel and non-atomic minerals in the country are open to Indian Nationals and companies as defined in Sub-section (1) of Section 3 of Companies Act, 1957. Expansion in the mining activities, is therefore linked to the demand in the market for minerals.